



Africanized Honey Bees:

Some Questions and Answers

Important facts about AHB:

- Africanized honey bees can sting only once and then they die. You cannot be stung multiple times by the same bee.
- The sting of an AHB is no more painful or harmful than that of a European honey bee.
- Swarms of Africanized honey bees and individual bees away from the hive are no more likely to sting than European bees.
- Near the nest or hive, AHB are likely to respond quicker and in greater numbers, to sting, and to chase intruders (including people) for greater distances than European honey bees.

What are Africanized honey bees?

Africanized honey bees (sometimes sensationalized as “killer bees”) are a type of honey bee that has migrated from South America into some of the lower United States. Honey bees are not native to the Americas; prior to 1956, the only honey bees found in North and South America were European honey bees, which were brought to the New World as early as the late 1500s. As the name suggests, European honey bees are native to Europe and are adapted to temperate climates. In 1956, some honey bees were imported from Africa to Brazil as part of a breeding experiment to produce a honey bee that would be well adapted to tropical areas. Some of those African bees escaped

from their apiaries and crossbred with the populations of gentle European bees found in Brazil. The resulting cross between those bees is the Africanized honey bee, or AHB, which retained the highly defensive, unwelcome, stinging behavior of the African strain.

Where are AHB now?

At present, AHB have spread through parts of the southwestern states of Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, Nevada, and California. The AHB moved into Texas from Mexico in October 1990, and migration since then has been through southern Texas and west into Arizona (July 1993), New Mexico (November 1993), California (November 1994), Nevada (August

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